

REMARKS

This Communication is in response to the Final Office Action mailed November 21, 2003.

The Applicant wishes to thank the Examiner for the courtesies extended in a December 16, 2003 teleconference. In that teleconference the Applicant and the Examiner discussed amendments to claim 18 to clarify the claim. The claims now specifically recite that the threaded fasteners are in a previously tightened condition and that the torque applied is an additional torque. Based on these amendments the Examiner agreed that the claims defined over the Rice reference. Applicant has also added new claims 22-25 which are similar to amended claim 18 but rather the torque is applied in a releasing direction. Applicant respectfully requests that the rejections of the claim be reconsidered and withdrawn. The Examiner agreed the Amendment would be entered and a non-final response communicated.

The Applicant and the Examiner also discussed drawing changes stated in paragraph 2 of the Office Action. The Applicant agrees to make the drawing change as identified by the Examiner and will submit such change in due course.

If a further conference is necessary with the Examiner, the Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned at the below-referenced number. Otherwise Applicant respectfully request a Notice of Allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

YOUNG & BASILE, P.C.



Thomas E. Bejin  
Attorney for Applicant  
Registration No. 37,089  
(248) 649-3333

3001 West Big Beaver Rd., Suite 624  
Troy, Michigan 48084-3107

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TEB/sld